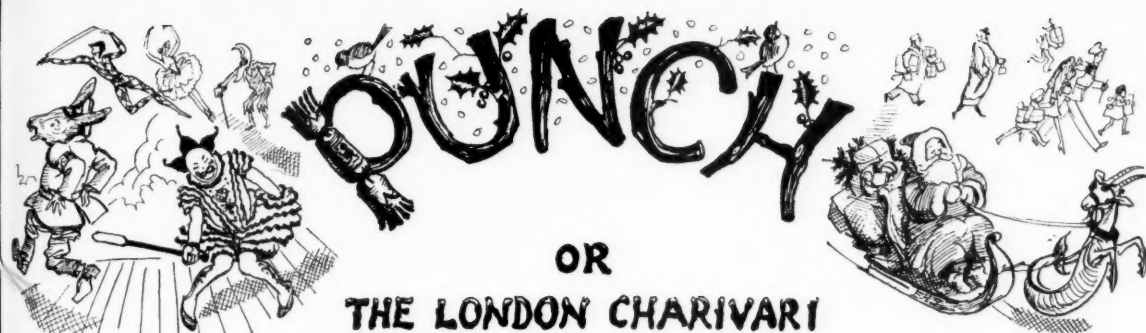


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Vol. CXC VII No. 5151

December 20 1939

Charivaria

THE public may rest assured that the special session of Parliament held recently was far more secret than the B.B.C. war-time headquarters.

German radio announcers have sneeringly remarked that many Englishmen still believe in fairies. That's nothing; many Germans still believe in HITLER.

A Manchester man has written a play. He has the revolutionary idea of trying it out in the West End to see what London thinks first.

"White elephants are very rarely for sale," according to an Indian traveller. Except of course in the wilds of the British jumble.



A shilling was found inside a coconut bought at a London shop. Perhaps the grower had crossed his palm with silver.

"Poles and Czechs are not forced to enter our fighting forces," says a Nazi broadcast. Most of them, we understand, join the German navy.



A North London man has a house with soundproof walls, windows and doors. But to no avail. Carols seep through the letter-box.

A Society masseuse is to write her memoirs. It is hoped that the volume will be ready for inclusion in the Spring Friction Lists.

A Surrey centenarian recalls that when he was learning to ride the velocipede he frequently fell into the village pond. This was even before the days of the penny-farthing dip.

An American writer says the only time he saw Dr. GOEBBELS he was passing through the revolving door of his hotel. And did he do his full share of the pushing?

"Variety is not what it used to be," says a correspondent. But at this time of year it is still pantomime.

Somebody has invented a toothpaste tube from which the toothpaste emerges at either end. What is there new about that?

"RESCUERS TOASTED IN HOT RUM"
Headline in Evening Paper.
There's gratitude.



"Music-hall jokes on red noses date back to about 1066," says a critic. No reflection is intended on William the Conk.

"MORE PETROL ON LEAVE"
Daily Mail.
We had noticed its absence.

"Snooker Player Rebukes Spectators," says a heading. Apparently they breathed.



"I've read your advertisement—amaze me with your wide selection of seasonable gifts, please."

If Cricket Were War

THE M.C.C. has disclosed that the Test Match between England and Euthasia is now in its second day. The English team left for their destination somewhere in the Pacific early last week. All have arrived safely. No further information is available.—B.B.C.

Our team is in the field. They are prepared to defend the honour of their country. Their prospect of victory is better than ever before. Yet the boastful Britons have not arrived. Do not believe the stories Mr. Fry tells you. The glorious innings of your batsmen exist only in his fertile imagination. Where is your English team? Ask your Mr. Fry.

Euthasian Radio.

It is not yet officially confirmed whether England is batting or not. It is learnt from unofficial sources that our opening pair is in. Reports from non-playing countries estimate the score at totals varying from 15 to 300 for no wicket.—B.B.C.

The greatest feat in the history of Test cricket has been achieved. Despite subversive criticism and attempted sabotage the whole team, with its reserves and scorer, has been transported safely to its destination without the loss of a single pad. Under the captaincy of a non-playing amateur such unity of purpose and complete accord has

been reached between amateurs and professionals at the outset of the struggle as was not established until the later stages of the last Test. In this spirit of co-operation the English team are determined to the last man to see it through.—Speech by the Minister for Overseas Cricket.

We have no quarrel with Yorkshire. Our struggle is with England and to that we will devote our last ball. We have no intention of allowing one small section of our country to fight our battles for us. Let England and Mr. Fry shelter behind the Yorkshire players. We, the whole of the Euthasian nation, take the field shoulder to shoulder.

Euthasian Radio.

The Ministry of Cricket Information now states that England are batting. Our opening pair have stood at the crease for two days and have now scored 23. This is in accordance with a predetermined plan. The Euthasian wireless claims that their bowlers have mastered the batsmen.—B.B.C.

Our batsmen will break their hearts.—C. B. Fry.

Your great batsman, Hammond, is out for a duck. There remain only two wickets to fall and the score is 91. We congratulate you. Our Leader, in a speech to his mate,

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praised their skill and daring. "Whatever tactics the English may adopt in the field," he said, "Euthasia knows the rules of fair play. Victory is assured."

Euthasian Radio.

Hammond, interviewed in his home to-day, where he is recovering from the accident that kept him out of the England side, made the following comment. "My lips are sealed. But you are at liberty to judge for yourself as to whether or not I am at present batting for England."

Daily Paper.

The Euthasian Leader has proclaimed that there will be fair play, that victory will be theirs. The monstrous incongruity of the two statements is manifest. We may expect a venomous attack on our batsmen of unparalleled atrocity. Already there is talk of a mechanised outfield. Be sure that it is fact. In the baffled brains of their bowlers other more staggering assaults on the ideals of sportsmanship will doubtless be conceived. Nothing but the grimmest determination of our batting and bowling forces will serve to frustrate for all time this threat to our supremacy.

*J. L. G*****.*

ENGLAND
678
ALL OUT
OFFICIAL

ENGLAND
ALL OUT
87
OFFICIAL

Reports continue to arrive from non-playing sources of the desperate tactics to which the Euthasian team has already had recourse. Fielders are said to be carrying spare balls and bowlers to be throwing the ball without comment from the umpires. It is reported that barracking of the Euthasian team by their own supporters is on the increase.

B.B.C.

Despite the rain which your Mr. Fry caused to fall during the Euthasian innings, our batsmen piled up a huge score in honour of their country. Against our lightning strokes the bowlers were helpless. The English batsmen are now facing an enormous deficit and have already lost three wickets for a trifling score. Typical of the lies broadcast to the trusting English public is the allegation that our Leader, under various guises, was our whole batting side. There is one thing that impresses us about this ridiculous falsehood: it shows an unconscious recognition of our Leader's greatness.—*Euthasian Radio.*

It is generally known that facts do not agree with the English. A daily dose of them should be made compulsory, but we cannot depend on our newspapers for that. I have been injecting the English public with facts for half a century with very little evidence of success. In this case they are clear. We are in danger of losing a game which it has hitherto been our privilege to win. Instantly we are full of the most horrid accusations of foul play. This is not playing the game, it is playing the fool, both of which incidentally are national attributes. What is the relative importance of winning or losing a game? If it is a matter of national prestige, then by all means let us at once mobilise our Navy, our Army and our Air Force. It must be brought home to these Euthasians that we are a nation of sportsmen.—*G. B. S***.*

* * * * *

Listeners will already have heard from our earlier news bulletins that England won the Test Match with Euthasia by one wicket after an exciting last day in which the issue

was always in doubt. The first full report of the match will be given in our nine o'clock news. Meanwhile the return of the English team was announced to-day. The captain, interviewed on his arrival, paid a tribute to the sportsmanship of the Euthasian team. "We are glad to have won," he said, "and are looking forward to meeting the great Euthasian team over here next summer."—*B.B.C.*

o o

Heil and Farewell

YOU'VE sunk a battleship in Scapa Flow,
You've sown a good few mines along the seas,
You've made more speeches than we'll ever know,
And these have been received with ecstasies.
Add to your triumphs and your victories
That many thousand Polish widows mourn,
And then reflect at evening at your ease
That every day you're one day nearer Doorn.

You may do many things before you go
And one or two more countries yet may seize,
You may attack the forts of Maginot,
To leave your men on the chevaux-de-frise,
You may loose gas upon the eastern breeze;
But sure and certain to your destined bourn
You still move onward, though by slow degrees,
And every day you're one day nearer Doorn.

If you go soon there's hope; if you go slow
Europe may be a land of shattered trees
And shell-ploughed fields where only thistles grow.
But, soon or late, who scans the future sees
Far off though clear a furtive shape that flees
Westward towards the dykes, not to return.
The Kaiser wants a man to hand round cheese,
And every day you're one day nearer Doorn.

Fuehrer, you've had a really splendid show.
Soon Liberty and England take their turn,
And France and Poland. We're not long your foe,
For every day you're one day nearer Doorn.



"The men are complaining that the soup's not as hot as it might be."

"You Cannot Break Our German Will"

YOU cannot bend the German mind,
You cannot coax the German brain,
Nor help the absolutely blind,
Nor heal the totally insane.

You cannot melt the German heart
Nor make the German soul infirm,
There is not any kind of dart
That perforates the pachyderm.

Immovable, unbound, unled,
Stays on his hooves the German ass,
And if you strike him on the head
He squeals and says that it was gas.
EVOE.

Looking Ahead

Diary of the Week, December, 1940

MONDAY. Herr Hitler's declaration yesterday that he had made preparations for a thirty years' war, brought a prompt reply from the British Government. The new issue of Candle Coupons, available to the public as from to-day, cover the period, January, 1940 to December, 1980. Instructions as to the method of applying for fresh coupons at the expiration of this period are included at the end of the book. This move, it is felt, will do much to convince the German Government that Britain is in earnest, despite the ridicule poured upon the plan by the *Berliner Tageblatt* which describes it as "a paltry attempt, along usual democratic lines, to drag South America into the war." The coupons, it will be remembered, entitle every registered householder to place a lighted candle in the window of his living-room, parlour, or kitchen on not more than one evening in each year, provided he can prove to the satisfaction of a competent A.R.P. Inspector, that he is awaiting the return of a long-lost relative or friend. For this purpose an area of the window not exceeding three inches high by two inches wide may be left uncurtained, the height of any such opening to be not more than four feet six inches from the ground.

Tuesday. Reports of the movement of large masses of German troops from the Swiss to the Yugo-Slav frontier reached Paris to-day. According to M. Morice (writing in the *Petit Parisien*), they met large masses of German troops moving from the Yugo-Slav to the Swiss frontier and a serious jam ensued. To add to the confusion a squadron of British Blenheims dropped copies of the Diseases of Sea-Birds (Gulls Protection) Act, 1939, on the struggling columns, and Gestapo agents fought a losing fight to retrieve the leaflets from beneath the wheels of lorries and the boilers of field-kitchens. "Many of the rank and file of the German divisions," says M. Morice in his account, "looked haggard and unshaven even from the air."

Wednesday. Officers and men of the B.E.F. now resident in the Maginot Line are knitting comforts for civilians at home. This was revealed by the Prime Minister in his weekly review of events before the House of Commons. An appeal issued to members of the Expeditionary Force about a week ago to do what they could to help the lads at home met with an immediate response, and thousands

of soldiers, working under the guidance of sergeants, are now turning out gloves and scarves for A.R.P. wardens, socks for auxiliary firemen and gaily-coloured little jumpers and hats for women ambulance drivers. "No one out there in their cosy billets and dug-outs," said Mr. Chamberlain, "can realise what it means to the thousands of sufferers from black-out nerves in this country to receive these extra comforts." True words. The B.E.F. are to be congratulated on making such admirable use of the long months of waiting.

Thursday. The new Ministry of Public Morale, set up to co-ordinate the work of the Ministry of Home Courage, the Ministry of National Calmness, and the Ministry of Civilian Resolution, to-day began its official life with the adoption of the happily-phrased slogan, "Smiling Through." The new Minister, Lord Ratchet, in the course of an inspiring address to the Women of Esher's "Chin-Up" League of Hope, said, "We must beware of false optimism. Death, disaster, and it may be defeat, lie ahead of us in the dark days to come. On land, at sea and in the air the enemy in his own good time will strike at us with the mightiest engine of destruction ever forged in the history of mankind. To deny this, to attempt to shut our eyes to the magnitude of the struggle that lies ahead is the basest form of treachery. Nay worse, it is deliberate wishful-thinking. Every day we read reports in our papers of German submarines sunk, German aircraft brought down, German essential supplies exhausted or dwindling. So far, so good. But let us not deceive ourselves. Let us face the facts. Who can doubt the capacity of our gigantic foe to build new submarines faster than we can sink them, to pour out an ever-increasing stream of bomber and fighter planes, to overcome by hook or by crook the deficiencies resulting from the Allied blockade? There are times, upon my soul, when I despair altogether of victory." At this point the Minister, who as recently as his ninetieth birthday underwent a serious operation, put his head in his hands and wept bitterly, and the Women of Esher returned quietly to their homes, greatly strengthened.

Friday. A quiet day. Two German seaplanes laid some particularly dastardly mines in Hampstead ponds and Russia absorbed Siam. Another blow for Hitler, whose dreams of a push into Indo-China must now be abandoned. German troops are said to be massing on the Roumanian frontier, but it is difficult to see how this is possible. Germany, as M. Morice points out (in the *Petit Parisien*), has no Roumanian frontier.

Saturday. Huge quantities of salted herrings were washed ashore on the East Coast to-day. This is believed to be part of a noisome German plan to paralyse our North Sea fishing industry and at the same time to drive the population mad with thirst. "The plan will not succeed," said Mr. Churchill in a special interview with newspapermen. "The Government has long been aware of the danger of some such unscrupulous attack, and plans for unsalting the herrings immediately they arrive are already far advanced. It will take more," he added, "than a few dried fish to bring the power and glory of the British Empire down into the dust."

A man in East Berkhamstead who boasted that he was not afraid to switch on his torch whenever and wherever he liked was overpowered by six wardens and taken to hospital. Subsequently he explained that there was no bulb in it anyway.

Sunday. German troops are now massing in the neighbourhood of Berlin, apparently with the idea of assassinating the Fuehrer. "One more move in the war of nerves," comments M. Morice, in (it is understood) the *Petit Parisien*.
H. F. E.



ENTENTE FINANCIERE

"Happy Christmas, mon brave!"
"Joyeux Noel, chum!"

[It has been agreed to avoid during the war alterations in the existing rate between the pound and the franc.]



"You know, Charlie, this isn't at all the France I expected."

Russiprussity

(A Fantasy—translated from the Russian)

II

"GOOD MORNING, Herr von Robbintrip," said the Senior Commissar for Vaguely Assisting the Germans.

"Good morning, M. Buzzinoff. This is Herr Himmler, head of the Gestapo."

"Charmed. This, I *think*, is the head of our Cheka. But the head of that body is changed so often that it is always difficult to be sure. At all events, here is M. Lashin, and, so far as I know, he has not yet been purged. You were not, I think, on the week-end purging-list, dear Lashin? No? Well, that is delightful. Now I expect you two policemen would like to get together and talk rubber truncheons. Take Comrade Himmler with you, dear Lashin, and show him some of our

liquidating plant. Meanwhile, I will take Comrade Robbintrip over the butter factory."

"I am sorry we were late," said Herr von Robbintrip, as the two statesmen walked up the little hill.

"I am glad you were late," replied M. Buzzinoff politely. "I *intended* you to be late. That is why I arranged for you to travel by train."

"How is this?" said the diplomatic wizard of Germany.

"I wanted you to apprehend," said the Commissar, "the really laughable condition of our railways. Did either of the engines leave the rails at any time?"

"No."

"Did any wheels fall off?"

"I do not think so."

"Did no bridges collapse as the train passed over?"

"I should have noticed that."

"Were the committee of engine-drivers sober?"

"As far as I know."

"Well, this is really very extraordinary. But still, you must confess you were a little behind time?"

"We *were* an hour or two late," admitted Robbintrip.

"Exactly. And were there any noticeable signs of dismay among the railway staff?"

"None whatever."

"You do not surprise me. In Russia we do not think so much of punctuality as you. Patience is the virtue, and we

expect our guests to practise it. Yet you are only a single individual. You are Envoy Extraordinary of Comrade Hitler——"

"Comrade ——?" said the Envoy, wincing.

"Of the Fuehrer—forgive me. Imagine, then, the difficulties you place before us when you suggest the punctual transference to Germany of large masses of iron ore, of oil, of butter. And now, of course, we have to defend ourselves against the Finns—— But here we are!"

They had crossed the top of the little hill, and gazed down upon the rolling plain beyond.

"There," said Comrade Buzzinoff, proudly, "is the F.F.V.S.F.A.B.G."

"I beg your pardon?"

"There—I beg *your* pardon—is the Fraternal Factory for Vaguely Supplying Fantastic Amounts of Butter to the Germans. From this vast factory, served by fifty thousand proletarian cows, five million tons of revolutionary butter a day——"

"But pardon me," said the Extraordinary Envoy, "I see nothing."

"You see nothing, Comrade?"

"I see a wide empty plain. I see no factory."

"There is of course no factory. It is, up to the present, a notional factory. But, looking closer, you now perceive, without doubt, certain parallel lines of white tape held down by firm proletarian pegs?"

"I do."

"Those lines are the ground plan not of the factory only but of the Model City which surrounds it. You have already observed, I am sure, the great Square in the centre which faces east and west. That is the Comintern-Robbintrip Square—so named, my dear Comrade, to your eternal honour."

"That is very kind," said the Envoy, blushing a little.

"On the south side of the Square," continued the Commissar, "you will see the great Loonin-Hitler Library. On the other side is the Hall of Cultivation and Refreshment. Beyond that——"

"All this," said Robbintrip, with a touch of testiness, "is highly stimulating. But about the butter?"

"The butter?"

"The butter. When will you begin to deliver the butter?"

"Do you know," said the Commissar, "I shall never again be surprised to hear that the patience of the Fuehrer is exhausted. It must have occurred to you, Comrade, that until we have extended the railway from this place to the German frontier it would be idle to manufacture the

butter at all. It is therefore proposed to build the railway first. On the other hand, in this desolate swamp a railway would be perfectly useless if there were no factory to feed it with goods. It is therefore also proposed to build the factory first. You see the difficulty?"

"Not very clearly," replied the German. "Could not the railway and the factory be built at the same time?"

"By no means," said the Commissar. "In this part of Russia there is only one hammer."

There was a short silence.

"At all events," he continued, "the Commissar for More or Less Getting Everything Going is considering the problem in all its aspects. Or rather, he was," said M. Buzzinoff thoughtfully; "for I have just remembered that he was one of those liquidated a week or two ago. I wonder," he went on dreamily, "if a new Commissar has been appointed. Since Steelin became empire-minded he has become forgetful about details. He lies in his great bed and laughs—'Ha, ha!'—like that."

"Then of course" the Commissar resumed, "there will be the inaugural celebrations. There will be a good deal of singing and dancing before production actually begins. Three months have been set aside for the Festival of Fraternal Supplies of Butter to Germany. Then we shall look about for the necessary butter-makers. The arrest of sufficient professors, engineers and counter-revolutionary elements may take some time——"

"Would it be too much to inquire," said von Robbintrip, controlling himself, "if you have any particular date in your mind for the first delivery of butter? You have a Plan, I presume?"

"We have. Your Fuehrer, I believe, said that he was preparing for a five years' war. This factory, we hope, will be pouring forth its fantastic supplies of butter about the beginning of the fifth and last year."

"Oh," said von Robbintrip. And again, "Oh."

"But come," said the Commissar cheerfully. "I hear the sound of blows. Himmler and Lashin, I fancy, are whipping each other. What boys!"

A. P. H.

A Naval Survival

ONCE, at Loch Ness (the sun was low),

I saw a thrilling silhouette
Coiling and dark against the glow,
And felt myself in Fortune's debt;
And now I never shall forget
(I thought the last had disappeared)
This morning in the Haymarket
I saw a sailor with a beard.

There was a period, long ago,
When beards were almost etiquette
For Admiral, Captain, C.P.O.,
As witness one who champions
yet

A well-known brand of cigarette:
"Never one more like him!" I feared—
But no, still waves one banner-
ette:

I met a sailor with a beard.

"Twas gas-masks sent the beards
below
(Aloft? All right, you martinet!),
A beard is difficult to stow,
However short, however wet;
But on this mariner's chin well-
set

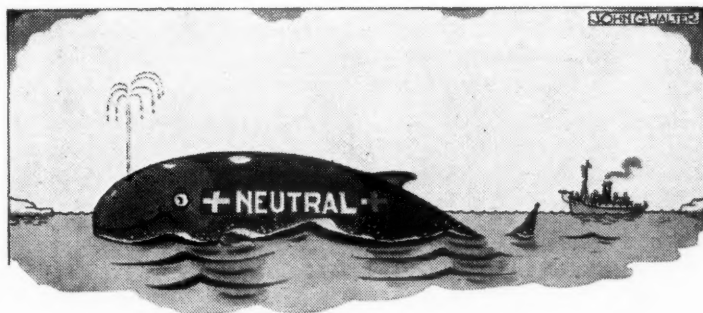
The growth was excellently reared.
Pointed, and trim, and black as
jet:

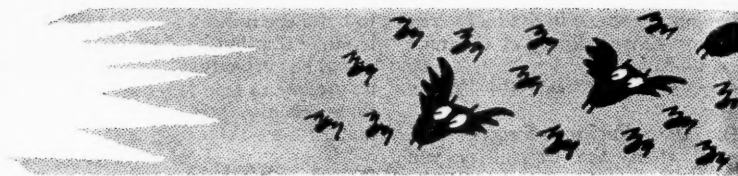
I met a sailor with a beard.

Envoi

Skipper, I'll lay you any bet
He definitely *was* not sheared;
He'd *Victory* on his cap, the pet:
I met a sailor with a beard!

J. C. S.





The Poet Under Orders

HENCE, loathed melancholy,
Of A.R.P. and black-out midnight born!
The Editor desires me to be jolly,
My muse with festive garlands to adorn.
So though the light be dim and irreligious,
And storied windows blotted everywhere,
We'll greet the sooty gloom with a prodigious
"WHAT—DO—WE—CARE!"

What do we care if Ribbentrop has been sent to say "Hello!"
To the Esquimaux—
Or if the German High Command have had a kick in the *pantz*
Because they wouldn't agree to submarine bases off the coast of Hants—



Or if Adolf has double-crossed Josef, or pinned on his breast
An Iron Cross, while Josef, visibly impressed,
Whispers in Adolf's ear: "If you've got a nickel,
What about a vodka gorki at the 'Hammer and Sickle'?"
What do we care if the Prime Minister of Zazupittzu
Has replied to the Fuehrer: "Swastikas to you—!"
Or if the Nazis have set up a "*werbegesellschaft*"
On the banks where Charon plies his craft;



Or discovered the First Lord of the Criminality
Guilty of further nautical rascality
And proved beyond doubt that Mr. Chamberlain as a nipper
Worshipped the Borgias and played darts with Jack the Ripper?



Ladies and, if I may use the abbreviation, gents,
Rid your minds of these grave political events;
They mostly mean that Hitler's knees are knocking—
Hang up your troubles with your Christmas stocking.
(We don't believe that Nazi spies disguised as Nannies
Intend filling the children's stockings with subversive
pamphlets—that's one of Granny's.)



Besides, the Government is in favour of us popping
Into the shops as usual to do our Christmas shopping.
After all, Aunts Lottie and Pottie must have their handbags,
Even if we can't see the shops for the sandbags.

Talking of sandbags, if yours get homesick, grow mushrooms, or spread diphtheria,
Give them a good dose at bedtime of Jones's *Anti-bagteria*.

So having decided what to give *whom*—
What about a bottle of "*Love in Bloom*"
For your little evacuee; and a box
Of Siren Sigars for Grandpa Cox;
And a luminous dog-lead
(Most necessary) for Miss Brede;





And one of those jumpers (*such a good idea*)
Embroidered with our war aims for Alethea;
And a reinforced bowler for Geoff
In the R.A.F.;
And a bag of cement
For dear old Mr. Trent;
And oh! yes, a couple of tins
Of Osoblack for Peterkins?—

Is Your Dog Jittery? PAINT HIM WITH OSOBLACK
He'll Think He's Invisible in
Daylight Aerial Attack
Recommended by the N.A.R.P.A.C.
"A perfect *dogsend*," writes Mrs. G.



"This black-out was sure sent to irk us—
Is that you, Someone? Hi! are you there?
Am I in Piccadilly ●
Or am I still in Trafalgar ■?"
"Madam, I too am at a loss—
I rather think we're at Charing X."

Outside the Store:

"That voice—that bark—that territorial roar!
Surely we've bumped into each other somewhere before?
Of course—it's Colonel Kensington-Gore!"



And now as regards
Christmas Cards.
The words this season
Have not only rhyme but reason.

General (A.R.P.) and Mrs. (A.T.S.) Bloodstock-Spear
Wish you a Gamelin Christmas and a Gort New Year.

... When the snow lay round about
Deep and crisp and even.
"Snow, my foot!" King Wence called out—
"Them be leaflets, Stephen."

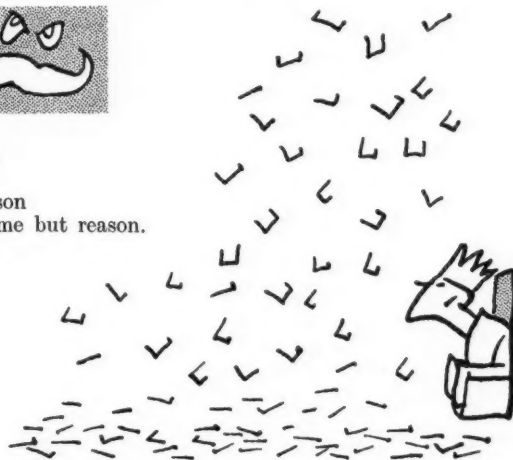


I can't think how the next one got in;
It looks to be of foreign origin.

Poor British Robin in the snow,
There are no crumbs for you, you know;
Behind that frosted cottage door,
Crumbs feed a family of four.
So we must wish you, Robin dear,
A Hungry Christmas and a Hungrier New Year.

Finally, this is certain to please—
In fact we're sending a lot of these:

May coming joys be larger, sorrows littler;
A MERRY CHRISTMAS and to ●.....!



At the Pictures

ANIMAL WEEK

PERHAPS I'm wrong, but I think the only MARX Brothers film that might be called classical, or shall we say unadulterated, was *Duck Soup*. In all the others, from *The Cocoanuts* down to *A Day at the Races* (don't count *Room Service*, which was an unfortunate interlude), the producers have put soft streaks. Uneasily conscious that the cinema will be sprinkled with people who have never seen the MARXES before and don't know what to make of them, these timid men have introduced odd scenes of pure musical-comedy, well aware that nobody who likes them will grasp the connection if GROUCHO does a ferocious parody of the same sort of thing in the next minute. *At the Circus* (Director: EDWARD BUZZELL), or *Marx Brothers at the Circus*, whichever you like to call it, has for true Marxians the same old defect. KENNY BAKER and FLORENCE RICE occupy the screen at intervals and supply romance and sing—very capably, but there it is: they don't really "belong." Even the animals here don't always belong, except for a charming trained seal that tells HARPO when he is about to make a wrong move in a game of draughts. . . .

However, enough of this serious talk. Whenever I'm tempted to explain the MARXES too solemnly I remember what I once heard a stern young man say to a stern young woman about a *Mickey Mouse* film: "It's a satire on reinforced concrete." The MARX Brothers' pictures are usually satires on very nearly everything, but it's hardly necessary to point the fact out.

I rather think this one is funnier than either *A Day at the Races* or *A Night at the Opera*, though there is little point in arguing about that either. The old conventions are observed: HARPO has his turn with the harp, CHICO his with the piano, GROUCHO his with MARGARET DUMONT, the rich and resilient widow with the trisyllabic name (this time

it's Mrs. Dukesbury). GROUCHO and CHICO have their intricately crazy argument (this time it's about a badge). GROUCHO makes his speech, or part of it, to a large gathering (this

time "the Four Hundred" of Newport—he counted them first). The well-dressed highbrows are routed and dignity finds itself swinging in its underwear from a trapeze. . . . The picture seems to me to be almost a vintage MARX, and I shall see it again at the first opportunity.

It is animal week, particularly at the Empire. There is a short PETE SMITH film, *Poetry of Nature*, in which shots of a number of animals and birds are put together with a certain comic effect. I don't think Mr. SMITH's commentary is by any means as good as usual, and much of the fun is forced, but I liked the sneering bear.

You get an utterly different kind of laugh, if you get one at all, from *Come on, George!* (Director: ANTHONY KIMMINS). Who goes to see GEORGE FORMBY pictures? The provinces, they tell me: quite often he isn't given a first show in London because it wouldn't be worth it, but in the provinces they lap him up. Personally, as a solo performer, he is all right: he has an amusing way of singing to his ukulele (if only his songs were better and didn't include such lines as:

*One another we'll stand by,
To prove my worth I mean to try),*

and he can always raise a laugh with his face; but the films he is in are marred by what I have grown used to describing briefly as "all the British faults," and we nasty stuck-up Londoners are put off by such things. Why do so many British directors refuse to attend to details—trivialities of background, lighting, dress, intonation? Presumably because their films can make money in the provinces without their taking any such trouble. All the same, I don't think it can pay in the long run.

This is a horse-racing farce, involving GEORGE FORMBY, in which he gets most of his laughs—I assure you people do laugh—by leaping into the air and saying "Oo" when anybody chases him (and everybody chases him). You now know practically everything about the film. R. M.



J.H. DOWD

SEALED ADVICE

"Punchy" HARPO MARX

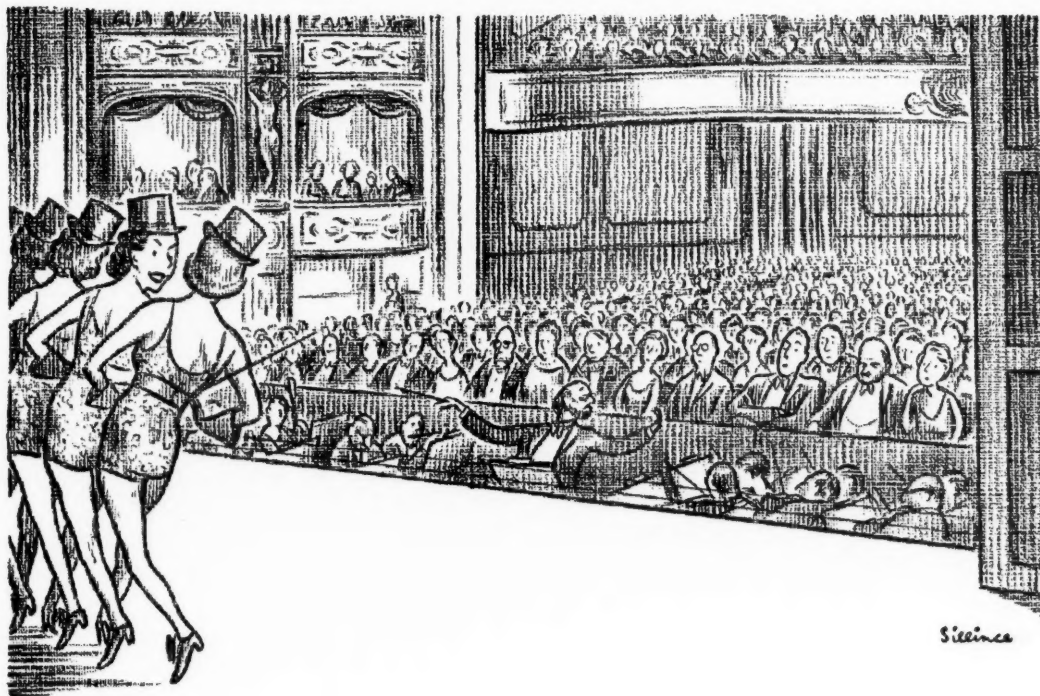


J.H.D.

STABLE SONG

George GEORGE FORMBY

[Come on, George!]



"Third from the right, front row."

Puppets For All

To the Editor of Punch

SIR,—Once again it appears that our statesmen, whom I have constantly taken the trouble to advise ever since they got us into these troubled waters, are failing to make use of a very important weapon of diplosthematics. It is hard that I should have to drag myself from my armchair in order to teach their business to people whom we really pay very heavily to do it.

It is now nearly two months since the Germans had the astuteness to create a *de facto* government in Poland and to endow it with all the panoply of diplomatic representation they could. No use was made of this clear challenge. Now again the signs appear in the heavens, and Russia has set up a *de facto* administration on the edge of Finland. Daily I scan my paper to see what reply our so-called statesmen will make. There is silence, and I must speak again. The sands are running out.

Is it not clear that we must not be above reprisals in this as in other matters? A *de facto* government for Germany should have been set up

weeks ago. A most suitable point for its meetings would be Spurn Head (the curly part) or, if irony were lost upon our enemies, Flamborough Head. As soon as the personnel had been arranged a treaty should have been drawn up with Germany through this simple means, and, with a little negotiation, the whole of the Kiel Canal and the North-western provinces of the enemy could have been annexed in return for a promise that they should be allowed to retain the remainder of their territory after the war—if, that is, they wanted to, for it is of no use to be more German than the German Government.

Now for Russia. I suggest that Lerwick should be declared the capital of the Russian Empire forthwith (and call it an Empire—let's have no nonsense about that!). There is still a host of unemployed crying out for work, and what better employment can these men find than the government of a land reaching from the White Sea to the Pacific? There is no time to be lost: a treaty should be signed at once and

submitted to the League of Nations, declaring all the little Russians to be federated under a venerable Shetland Father (it is of no use to ignore the time-honoured prejudices of a proud race), whose shadow, falling over Russia and Siberia, will take the place of that of the dictator Stalin; the same treaty will declare that the Little Father of His People renounces their independence in favour of a political arrangement whereby Russia becomes part and parcel of the sub-continent of India in return for the granting of exclusive fishing rights in the White Sea during the winter months.

Masters thus of half Germany and all Russia, we can hardly expect that the other part of Germany will resist. But time is of the utmost importance, or we may wake up one day to find that governments for these islands have already been set up in Heligoland or the BB Islands. This would be a disaster hard to combat. Let us hope that the enemy does not think of it first.

Yours, etc.,

PATRIOT.



Ballads for Britons

"Don't Let Our Tommy Join the Vegetarians"

A MOTHER read the news beside the fire one afternoon;
Her husband fed their first-born with stewed apples
and a spoon:

But presently the woman from the tidings of the day
Her tearful eyes averted and these burning words did say:
"It seems that this here Stalin, like that Hitler, doesn't
drink.

He doesn't smoke. He don't eat meat. Well, don't it make
you think?

Mussolini lives on lettuces. His drinks no man can blame.
And Napoleon, so the paper says, was very much the same:

*Well, don't let our Tommy join the vegetarians !
I'm sure we don't want no dictators here.
See what it done to all them Nords and Naryans !
They may feel good, but, goodness, ain't they queer ?
It's very strange, and I can't understand it :
Cut out the beef—and man becomes a bandit.
There's something in the veg.
As sets his mind on edge,
And makes him itch to boss it, far and near.
I want our little Tommy
To have breeding and bonhommy—
So let's feed the boy on British beef and beer."*

Her spouse replied, "You're right, Maria, as you always are.
It only shows this abstinence must never go too far.

I've often said it ought to be prohibited by law—
Well, look how many years we've had to suffer Bernard
Shaw!

They say it keeps a bloke like Hitler fit. All very well;
But what's the use of Hitler when he's fit it's hard to tell.
I shouldn't wonder much if God had sent us fags and drink
Just to keep us out of mischief, dear. Well, don't it make
you think?

*Don't let our Tommy join the vegetarians !
We don't want no dictators in the home.
See what it done to all them nasty Naryans !
See what it done in Russia and in Rome !
All very well to have your lettuce luncheon,
And then go hunting with a rubber truncheon ;
All very well to chew
A radish-root or two,
And then slip out and slaughter half the sphere !
Eat mutton and be matey ;
You may not live till eighty—
But what's the good of living if you're queer ?"*

"It isn't only Europe," she replied to his applause,
"There's dangers nearer home of which the carrot is the
cause.

Who is the bloke that wants to knock all other countries out?
It ain't the gent sits smoking after raw beef-steak and stout.
It's the wisps what live on water, dear, and farinaceous fare
As wants to send the British Army almost everywhere;
Though, come to that, I've noticed, when we has to fight
the foe,

It's the beefers and the boozers, as a rule, is first to go.

*Don't let our Tommy join the vegetarians
And be a bully or a buccaneer !
Shield him from these here teetotalitarians—
We don't require no bijou Fuehrers here.
Tell him how oft a vegetable diet
Goes hand in hand with rudery and riot ;
Don't overdo the fruits,
Teach him to smoke cheroots
And take his pint of stout without a tear.
We want our little Tommy
To have breeding and bonhommy,
So let's build him up with British beef and beer."*
A. P. H.

War and the Author or The Author and War

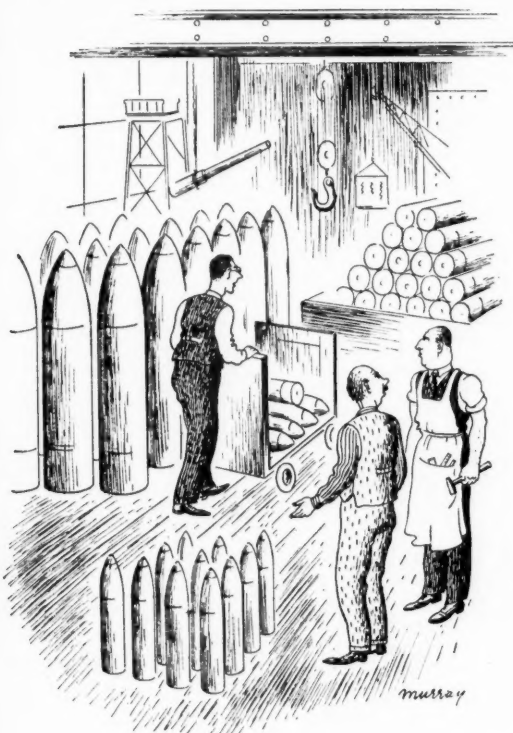
THE long dark autumn evenings have merged into the
long dark winter evenings which will, a long while
hence, in their turn merge into the spring black-out.
How are you going to spend them?—bearing in mind that
there will be nothing else by that time to spend.

The publishers' circulars of Great Britain, with practically
one voice, are telling you the answer.

You are going to read. Even those of you who have never,
to all intents and purposes, read before, and may quite
likely feel at the end of a book or two that you never want
to read again.

The way the publishers look at it is this—and whatever
you readers may think, it's giving some of us authors a new
lease of life.

We may be in for a long war, or a short war, or one of



"Why, I've known Wilkins since he was only as high as a 47."

bit inclined to part company—what form is your escape-reading to take?

Are you to lose yourself in a murder-problem, with the gallows waiting for somebody or other on the last page, and at least one of the characters—and with any luck two or three—meeting a violent end and the detective just missing the same fate by inches?

That might be nice.

Or, again, there's love—but do not on any account leave this form of escape-literature carelessly lying about for the old to find. They would much prefer not to escape at all.

Some publishers seem to think that poetry may serve your purpose, but here much will depend on your political views, as no poetry is written now on any subject other than politics, and not more than about one Party ever makes use of this medium.

Another way you can escape is, if you fancy the idea, by reading a book about an American tough. This will waft you into a region of blows, kicks, curses, dirt, drink, starvation, violence, hatred, injustice, cruelty and despair, and will also teach you many new words, only you will probably—and rightly—hesitate to make much use of them.

Many a publisher has had the good idea of advising you to escape really thoroughly by way of an eight-hundred-and-fifty-page novel about family life in the Victorian era. Get right back into the atmosphere of domestic tyranny, maltreated children and overworked and underpaid poor, and at the same time contrast the really magnificent eight-course dinners of the prosperous with your own labour-saving cold supper every time the cook goes out. If this doesn't waft you away into the happy land of dreams, nothing ever will.

Finally, a rather optimistic type of publisher may suggest that you should escape by reading books with such titles as *What Adolf Said to My Aunt*, *How I Smiled as I Waved Stalin Good-bye*, *Why I Do Not Care About Hitler*, and so on.

Consult your own feelings as to the wisdom of losing yourself in this type of rose-coloured fantasy.

But whatever your choice, read something.

A war spent in reading is a well-spent war. E. M. D.

those wars that aren't like other wars but still have many of the same inconveniences.

You will, as the publishers frankly and fearlessly point out, be forced by black-out, rationed petrol and the general state of your finances to spend the dull dark evenings (see above) in your own dull dark homes; and your friends and neighbours, for similar reasons, will remain in theirs.

(Some of you no doubt will regret this more than others will.)

The burden of taxation, so cheerfully shouldered by all—ha, ha, ha—will make itself felt, at a rough guess, somewhere about January, and it is improbable that you will really have recovered from it by the following December. Some publishers go so far as to suggest that the whole state of everything in general, may, very slightly and imperceptibly, have impaired your moral.

Even if this should be so—and personally I can't imagine what makes them think of such a thing for a moment—do not at once commit suicide.

Instead, read a book.

You are going to be reduced to all kinds of straits before the war is over, and you may just as well begin with this.

Every single publisher is agreed on that point.

It has been discovered that reading is an escape (see "Psychology" in *Everybody's Pocket Encyclopædia*).

The question is—and here the publishers are more than a

"Lengard came into the saloon smiling affably. He was fifty now. His face had been debauched by his life, without any trace on it of enjoyment. The thick lids and arched black eyebrows hung over the lower part of the face."—From a Novel.

So how could he enjoy anything?



"Mrs. Jones has got a new gas-mask carrier, dear."



"H'm! I could have sworn I heard a man's voice in this room."

Trouble With a Smile

The Commandant to her Lower Ranks:

YOU have acquired the soldier's mien
In walking out and drill,
You keep your shoes and buttons clean
And labour with a will;
In one respect alone you err,
Which dims your fair repute,
When you go past an officer
You smile as you salute.

They:

Madam and Sir, your words are true;
We own it with regret,
But normal habits cling like glue
And we are greenish yet;
We have tried hard, and still we try
To ape the proper style,
But, if an officer goes by,
When we salute we smile.

She:

In civil dress a civil bow
Demands a grin no doubt,
But, seeing that you're soldiers now,
We'll leave that detail out;

Observe the man of lowest rank,
Regard the new recruit,
His face becomes a perfect blank
When offering a salute.

They:

Girls, we are up against a snag.
It's not to be denied
That, be it said for once, The Hag
Has reason on her side;
These creatures now are the élite
And we mere rank and file,
So when we pass them in the street
As we salute—

The officers:

You'll smile.

Your drill, we're sure, is of the best,
Your shoes and buttons bright,
But you are not, the gods be blest,
Like Thomas Atkins, quite;
For Auntie, with her little airs,
You mustn't give a hoot.
Leave her to mind her own affairs
And smile when you salute. **DUM-DUM.**



COMRADESHIP

“Go forth and preach the Brotherhood of Mankind to the workers of the world!”

Mr. PUNCH'S HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND



IN A GOOD CAUSE

The buying of this material has absorbed the greater part of the money so far collected, and unless further donations are received the cold winter will be upon us before the comforts can be made up. Every penny subscribed will be used for the comfort of the men serving, or Hospital patients, and no expenses whatever will be deducted. Though we know well that these are days of privation and self-denial for all, we yet ask you, those who can, to send us donations, large or small, according to your means; for experience in the last war has proved a hundred times over how urgent may be the call and how invaluable is the assistance that can be rendered. Will you please address all contributions and inquiries to:—Punch Hospital Comforts Fund, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

YOU are asked to think and to think in good time of the wounded. At any moment their needs may become imperative. They will not consider themselves heroes, they will not complain; they will be those who have neither fallen in action nor come safely through the ordeal, but are part of the reparable human wastage of war; we shall hear them speaking again—the less seriously disabled—in the language long ago familiar to us: “I got my packet at —; I was luckier than some,” and yet there will be months of pain in front of them before they can take their place on active service or in civilian life once more.

You are also asked to think of the Navy at sea, the men in the trenches, the men flying, minesweepers, search-light posts, anti-aircraft stations. All are in exposed, cold, wet situations. They need Balaclava helmets, stockings, socks, mittens and woolly waistcoats for the winter.

Mr. Punch has already bought and distributed:—

Chintz . . .	350 yds.
Bleached Calico . .	640 ”
Unbleached Calico . .	300 ”
Turkey Twill . . .	50 ”
Flannelette . . .	3752 ”
Winceyette . . .	4075 ”
Turkish Towelling . .	86 ”
Ripple Cloth . . .	1420 ”
Knitting Wool. . .	7668 lb.

Impressions of Parliament

Synopsis of the Week

Tuesday, December 12th.—Lords: Debate on Ministry of Information.

Commons: Statement on War in the Air. Various measures advanced.

Wednesday, December 13th.—Lords: Debate on Mediation for Peace.

Commons: Secret Session.

Thursday, December 14th.—Lords: Statements on the Navy and India.

Commons: P.M.'s Statement on War. Farming.

Tuesday, December 12th.—Their Lordships listened attentively, some entertained, some shocked, to Lord RAGLAN's account of life in the Censorship Department, from which he has lately resigned. It was not flattering. He had been given £750 a year for looking at the illustrated Press, on which he had never managed to spend more than an hour a day; he had refused the offer of a secretary, but was confident that he could have had an assistant and a clerk if he had asked for them; he had prevented a lot from being published, but he doubted if any of it would have helped the enemy. As for the Department generally, it was overstaffed and overpaid. Except for a few members, the night shift passed its time in camp beds. When he had complained that four lady examiners often had nothing to do all day, a fifth was appointed. The photographic staff spent its time banning photographs of Lady ASTOR playing with children, and striking out such innocent names as "Bognor" and "Bexhill" from captions of photographs of evacuated schools. The trouble was that Sir WALTER MONCKTON had been given quite inadequate powers for a very tough job.

The Government reply to this was too vague to be impressive, Lord DUFFERIN taking the line that Lord RAGLAN should be stood in the corner for disloyalty and for not really trying to find work, and Lord MACMILLAN assuring the House that Lord RAGLAN's successor had already found plenty. A recent inquiry, he added, had recommended still further staff to assist the Censors. Lord MIDLETON, eagle-eyed for waste, threatened that unless the Government took economy more seriously he would be forced to make certain unpleasant disclosures, and

Lord STRABOLGI took advantage of the debate to heave a brick at the B.B.C. for dullness.

In the Commons the CHANCELLOR announced the very important financial arrangement with France, linking the two currencies, and Sir KINGSLEY WOOD made an encouraging statement

Bishop of CHICHESTER argued this afternoon that it might be better to consider peace terms now rather than wait until Germany was crushed. "Fighting to the bitter end," said the Bishop, could bring nobody any good.

Lord HALIFAX took exception to this phrase, which he thought suggested that we were fighting for the sake of fighting. He regretted the whole debate for the impression it would give abroad of disunity, and he saw nothing in Herr HITLER's present frame of mind which offered a fair chance for future peace. We had no desire to crush Germany, but we were out to secure international order. The tragedy was not of our making.

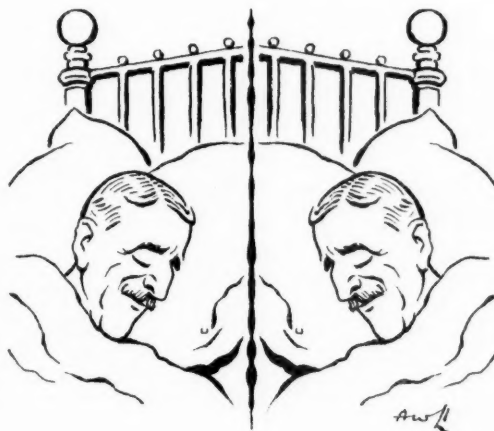
In the Commons at four o'clock, Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, scanning the horizon suspiciously, spied strangers, and all non-elected dross having been hustled from the building by the Gestapo, and Mr. P.'s R. extracted from underneath the SPEAKER's chair, the House settled down to a lovely cosy chat.

?! ? Ssh!

Thursday, December 14th.—Lord STANHOPE gave the Lords a statement on the war similar to that of the P.M., Lord CHATFIELD spoke proudly of the "successful and brilliant fight" in the South Atlantic, and Lord ZETLAND, describing the loyalty of the Indian peasantry as well as of the Princes, appealed to Congress and the Moslem League to come to terms.

The Commons were as delighted to hear from Sir JOHN ANDERSON that dim street-lighting is to be allowed (except on the East and South-East Coasts) as they were sorry to learn from a written answer that the CHANCELLOR had not repented of his increased tax on motor-cars.

The P.M.'s statement, the last in Parliament for a month, held up Nazi Germany as the prime aggressor who had paved the way for the Russian adventure; her defeat, he said, must remain our chief objective. He spoke of the material help we were sending to Finland, of British troops in the Maginot Line, of the gallant action against the *Graf Spee*, of the fresh successes of the R.A.F., and of the splendid assistance we were getting from the Dominions and the Colonies. He ended with an appeal to parents not to bring back their children to London for Christmas, and with a reminder that we were fighting for ideals long sacred to us.



"TO-DAY'S GOOD TURN"

Scene from a busy day in the Censorship Department as described by Scoutmaster Lord RAGLAN.

on progress in the air. He said that unified control of our air defences had already proved its worth and that our fighters had established a definite superiority over the enemy. We must

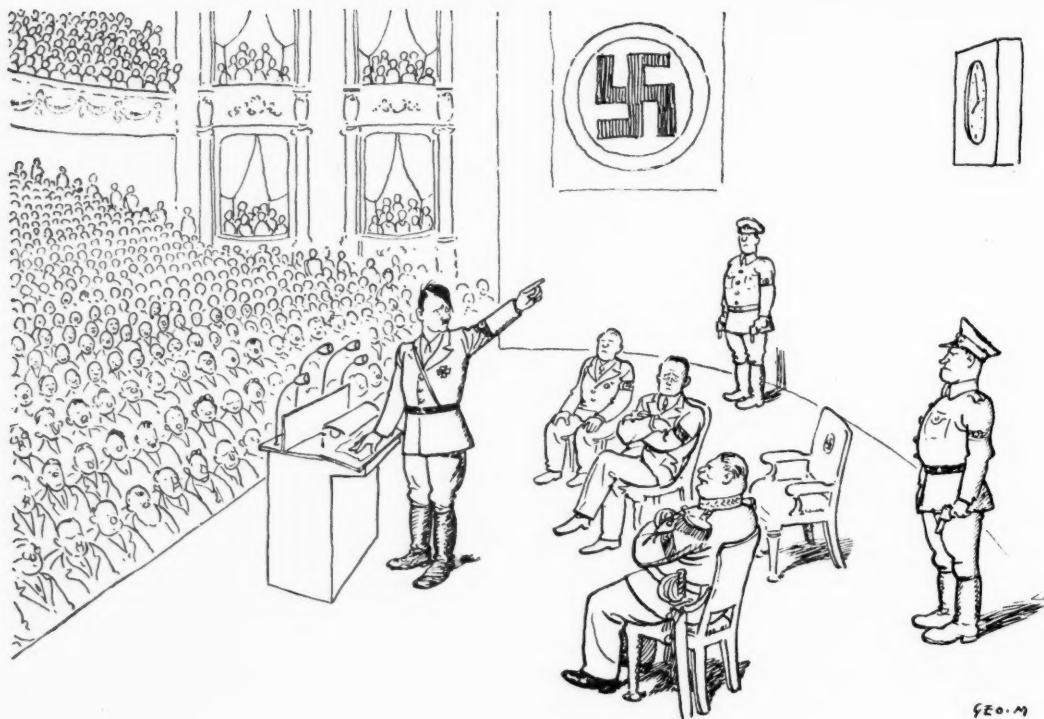


AN UNAPPRECIATIVE LISTENER

Lord STRABOLGI complains again about "the repetition, dullness and paucity of the news given in the British broadcasting programmes."

be prepared for a more strenuous chapter, perhaps soon, perhaps in the spring.

Wednesday, December 13th.—Lord DARNLEY, Lord ARNOLD and the



TRIALS OF A PUBLIC SPEAKER

*"Is that clock right?"**Correspondence of a Censor*

DEAR MRS. BOLEWEEVIL,—In the course of my duties as a censor of letters I couldn't help noticing, since you devoted some three pages to the subject, that you were a martyr to tired feet. Now I know what it is to suffer in this way, so I feel that I must write and tell you of the benefit which I have derived from bathing the affected members in a solution of bread-crumbs and barley-water. I am afraid I was compelled to delete the instructions which you sent your sister for knitting a pullover suitable for our fighting forces. My wife tried to follow the instructions during the fortnight that your letter was with us, and since her efforts seemed to be heading unmistakably towards a tea-cosy I felt I was justified in assuming that you had inadvertently chosen the wrong pattern to send. We were

unable to believe that you were genuinely desirous of providing the Forces with tea-cosies, even supposing they could discover some outlet for the arms and head.

Yours very truly,

HERBERT CLAMM.

P.S.—I loved your description of the moonlight over the downs and your graphic account of the anti-aircraft guns peeping out of the heather "like giant sticks of liquorice," though I wasn't able to follow all the technical details you supplied.

DEAR MRS. JAMES,—In a letter from a Mrs. Tightfit to a Mrs. Peahen which recently came into my hands officially I was interested to find mention of your husband, Chutney James, my old school friend. James came to Cadminster in the hard winter of '03 and

early made his mark as a deadly adversary with the bread pellet. I was shocked to learn that he was beating you, though not surprised when I recall what a stern disciplinarian he was—ready in his last years to pounce on and ruthlessly stamp out the slightest hint of inefficiency on the part of any of his fags. I would suggest that if he starts beating you again you might try saying "What became of Clamm's batting gloves?" in a sinister voice. I hope that you still find a use for the fish-slice which I believe I presented to Chutney on the occasion of his wedding.

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT (FISHY) CLAMM.

DEAR MR. DRILL,—The remark which in your letter to Mrs. Homingpin you claim to have been made by your little niece was actually first made

by my Uncle Redgrave when, as a child of three, he was taken to the Great Exhibition. I have taken the liberty of mentioning this in a footnote and also altering the ending slightly in a way which I am sure you will agree is an improvement. The story now runs as follows:

Great Aunt Rosa (to her son Redgrave). Now, Redgrave, say "Good-bye" to Canon Corker.

Uncle Redgrave. Shan't.

Canon Corker. Come, now, say "Good-bye," you little ruffian.

Uncle Redgrave (to Canon Corker, resignedly). Good-bye, you little ruffian.

I am sorry to hear your parsnips have not repaid the confidence you placed in them.

Yours, etc.,

H. CLAMM.

P.S.—Do you honestly think you spell manoeuvres "manœuvres"?

DEAR MRS. BEAMEND.—With reference to your letter to a Miss Handcart declaring your affection for a Mr. Freebooter, I have, curiously enough, had to deal with some of Mr. Freebooter's correspondence and am in a position to tell you that it is not a bit of use you running after him because he is in love with a certain Miss Claplow. Perhaps it would be kindest in the end to tell you that when Mr. Freebooter has occasion to bring up your name he more often than not refers to you as the "not very merry widow." I was sorry to hear that you were finding the long winter evenings dull and that your little dog is off colour. I may be passing through your neighbourhood next Tuesday, and as I have made rather a study of dog's ailments perhaps you would not take it amiss if I were to drop in to offer a little advice and (who knows?) encouragement.

Yours in antic,

HERBY CLAMM.

MY DEAR COUSIN.—I must apologise to you that in my capacity as a censor I was forced to delete so much of my sister's letter to you, but the censored passages could not have been of the slightest interest to you and merely dealt with private affairs of mine which Jane had no right whatsoever to divulge. I regret also that the snapshot (taken by me) of Jane and her baby is not included as I do not consider it anything like my best work, as it gives Jane a quite erroneous appearance of good looks. I have substituted a snapshot of my dog Gregory which I consider much more tasteful. I am thoroughly enjoying my new job and

find it far more exhilarating than my work as a photograph tinter.

Yours ever,

COUSIN CLAMMY.

DEAR Mr. MAPLEDURHAM.—Forgive my apparently butting into your affairs, but I couldn't help observing in your letter to Mr. Dimple which came to my notice recently that you claimed to have come to an understanding with a young person called Bubbles. If by

any conceivable chance it turned out to be Bubbles Pinkerton-Jones, I strongly advise you against continuing the attachment, as I was engaged to her once myself and discovered that among other things she wears a wig and has a husband in the Federated Malay States. If, as I hope, it is quite another Bubbles I can only wish you the very best of luck in your venture.

Yours truly,

HERBERT CLAMM.



"Could I indent for a clock in 'ere, Sir, so as I can tell when the albumen which lies over the surface of the meat is 'ardened an' sealed?"

At the Play

"GREAT EXPECTATIONS"
(RUDOLF STEINER HALL)

I CAN'T see why anyone ever tries to put a DICKENS novel on the stage. If somebody asked you to send him in a matchbox a synopsis of a city dinner he had had to miss, the collection you could make—always supposing you were not thrown out at once for fumbling with the turtle jelly—would give a fair impression of the substance of the menu but none at all of its richness, of the idiosyncrasies of the chef or even of the size of the helpings. So it is, I think, with dramatising DICKENS.

There are good reasons why his special qualities cannot be captured in the matchbox of two and a half hours of the theatre. Obviously he was a very uneconomical writer in the dramatic sense, and a great user of adjectives, a currency not negotiable in the theatre except by the most indirect methods; but, more important than these, he was a literary distortionist, making his creatures stand out from the common run of men as excitingly but credibly eccentric. That they are credible, at any rate while you are reading about them, is a big part of DICKENS' genius, but it is a trick which cannot be replayed in terms of flesh and blood. *Mr. Pickwick* or *Mr. Micawber* quickly swell in the mind of a reader to towering figures of nonsense; shown in the life—and however competently shown—they are drained of DICKENS' personal magic and become silly and rather wearisome old men.

This production proves my point conclusively, and does so by virtue of its merits. It skates very intelligently round the difficulties of the narrative, and to anyone who had never read the book it would give quite a good idea of the course of the story. What it would not explain would be DICKENS' claim to be something more than a fertile scenario-writer with a turn for the bizarre. Nor would it suggest how deeply

and effectively he was able to dig into the emotions. When I read the book of *Great Expectations* I still find parts of it very affecting, but nothing in this production moved me at all, neither

wrote the play or a sound cast for the way they acted it, but only to repeat that DICKENS into the theatre just doesn't and cannot go.

To cover frequent changes of scene and gaps in continuity the device is used of a reader. It makes the play still slower, but if DICKENS must be done, then this seems the right way, for a little authentic atmosphere is a great help.

The two characters who come nearest to their true dimensions are *Herbert Pocket*, taken by Mr. GUINNESS himself, and *Joe Gargery*, by Mr. RICHARD GEORGE. The first is a performance of such freshness that you feel it would have satisfied even DICKENS; one of the most engaging young men in English literature is most engagingly played. *Joe's* charm, so differently compounded of beef and clumsy gentleness, is equally sure. Some of the play's best moments are between him and the younger *Pip*, whom Master CHARLES MURRAY takes with an ease and confidence which promise solidly for his future.

As well as being the *Reader* for the early scenes, a part for which voice and presence fit him admirably, Mr. MARIUS GORING is *Pip* grown up;

here I thought him not so good, for though he gives *Pip* sincerity in the last difficult scenes he also gives him an excess of manner which doesn't ring true. Miss MARTITA HUNT does what she can for the rather impossible part of *Miss Havisham* and Mr. ROY EMERTON makes *Magwitch* a grim, and later an embarrassing, ruin.

Cobwebs, scenery and costumes are by MOTLEY, who have put all they know into the wreckage of the bridal party. One feels that if only poor *Miss Havisham*, so appallingly deficient in Vitamin D, had had a sun-lamp the course of the story might have been a good deal brighter. All the vapours were known to DICKENS except those of mercury.

The Actors' Company, which puts on this play, is a new co-operative venture. Its next production will be *King John*.
ERIC.



HEAVY GOING IN THE MARSHES

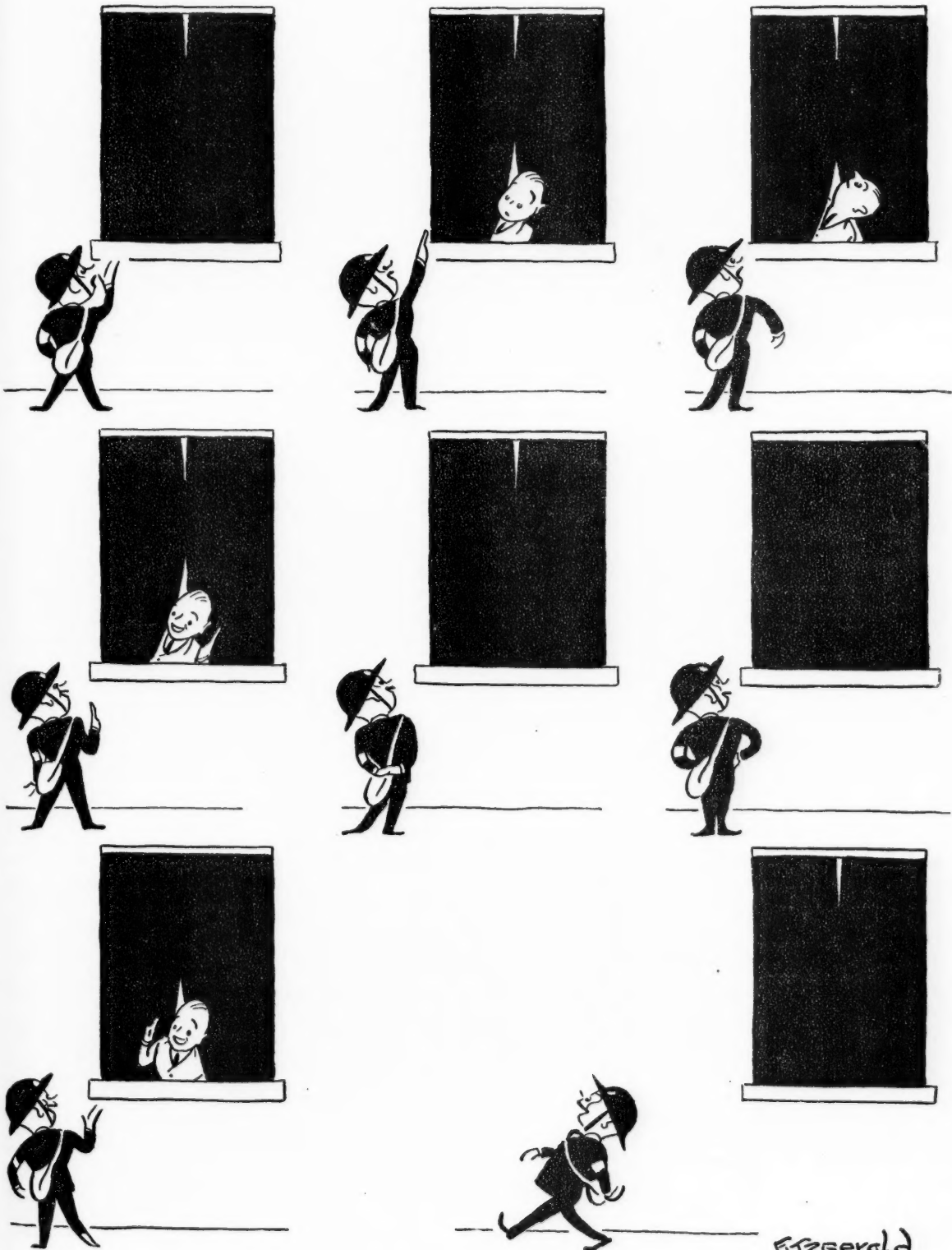
Mrs. Joe Gargery	MISS BERYL MEASOR
Mr. Pumblechook	MR. FRANK TICKLE
Mr. Wopsle	MR. ALAN SYKES
Pip	MASTER CHARLES MURRAY
Joe Gargery	MR. RICHARD GEORGE

Miss Havisham's repentance nor *Pip's* dilemma nor the wretched end of *Magwitch*. To say this is not to criticise Mr. ALEC GUINNESS for the way he



MISS HAVISHAM REPENTS

Miss Havisham	MISS MARTITA HUNT
Pip	MR. MARIUS GORING





"Bain't seen old cow anywhere, 'avee, Zur?"

Behind the Lines

XIII.—Safety

I'M fixing up a Friendly Pact
Of Firm and Mutual Assistance,
By which, if Russia is attacked,
I watch from a respectful distance;
And Russia, if one threatens me,
Says "Fancy that!" and "Oh, I see."

This Treaty emphasises first
A lasting pledge of non-aggression:
And Stalin, who had feared the worst,
No longer harbours the impression
That on 'some dark and windy night
I may outflank the Russian right.

Next, actuated solely by
The spirit of eternal justice,
Our boundaries we rectify
In perfect trust. To show what trust
is,
Each party willingly concedes
The safeguards which the other needs.

I'm giving her the Taj Mahal,
The Ministry of Information,
Part of the rolling-stock at Basle,
A five years' lease of Down Street
Station,
A small hotel in Amsterdam,
And naval bases on the Cam.

And Russia gives me in exchange
An iceberg which she isn't using,
Bits of the Himalaya Range,
A cruiser which has finished cruising,
All the Pacific Cortez saw,
And ten years' lease of Bernard Shaw.

The Treaty has a final clause
Which many think the most
impressive:

"At any time, for any cause,
Should either party feel aggressive,
The Treaty is in Law and Fact
A Mutual Aggression Pact."

A. A. M.

Letters to the Registrar of a Military Convalescent Hospital

(Being further Letters to the Secretary
of a Golf Club)

From Richard Balance, Manager, The
National Banking Corp., Ltd.,
Roughover.

2nd October, 1939.

DEAR MR. WHELK,—I have
been instructed by my Head
Office to call in Roughover
Golf Club's outstanding overdraft. I
am therefore arranging to sell the
Club's securities which were trans-
ferred to the Bank's name when this
overdraft was first sanctioned.

As this will still leave a debit
amounting to £343 8s. 4d. against your
current account, I shall be glad if you
will note that any further cheques
drawn will only be negotiated should
there be sufficient funds to cover.

Assuring you of my very best atten-
tion at all times,

Yours faithfully,

R. BALANCE, Manager.

From Mrs. Whelk (his mother), 103,
Southward Street, London, S.W.1.

Wednesday.

MY DARLING PATRICK,—It is simply
terrible to hear from you that the Club
will probably go smash and that your
salary has not been paid for the last
seven months.

I always knew General Sir Armstrong
Forcursue would bring about this state
of affairs sooner or later, and I suppose
things finally came to a head through
his not being able to join up again and
making himself so increasingly unbearable
to members that everyone left the
Club.

I have always said that he and
Admiral Stymie and that horrid Lionel
Nutmeg, who was in the Malayan Civil
Service with Uncle Jim, were a pack of
good-for-nothings.

I send you herewith a small cheque
which I hope will help you over your
more immediate difficulties.

Your loving

MOTHER.

From General Sir Armstrong Forcursue,
K.B.E., C.S.I., Captain Roughover
Golf Club.

Thursday, 12th October.

DEAR WHELK,—It is of course all
your fault about the Club going down.
Personally I never had a shadow of
doubt where you would eventually land
us all, what with your bad management
and lack of tact. And quite privately I
can tell you now that the thing which
really broke the camel's back (although
you may shout till all's blue it is the
war) was your putting up the price of
brown sherry last June.

With regard to the last part of your
letter, it seems incredible that you
should ask me as Captain of the Club
what we are to do now—much as a
parlour-maid would her mistress after
falling on her face and breaking a tray
full of cut-glass. But let me point out
once and for all—it was *you* who got the
Club into the mess and it is for *you* to
get it out.

Yours truly,

ARMSTRONG FORCURSUE.

From Ezekiel Higgs, Links Road,
Roughover.

12th October, 1939.

DEAR MR. WHELK,—This is bad
news about the Club having to shut up
owing to the war, but it has just
occurred to me that rather than pack
up altogether, couldn't the place be
turned into a Military Convalescent
Hospital for the duration?

The fine marine air would be a great
tonic; and with all the wonderful
panorama of coastal views it is just the
sort of restful place to set our men on

This we all agreed to, and I was asked to write and inform you of the fact. Our reason is solely one of duty and patriotism.

Yours very truly,
CHARLES SNEYRING-STYMIE.

From Ephraim Wobblegoose, House Steward, Roughover Golf Club.

DEAR MISTER WHELK,—Well, Sir, the General and that Admiral Stymie and all have been telling me about the Club being converted to a Hospital, and that you is to raise the money by local subscription, etc., and we elder ones is not all to lose our jobs as at first all feared, and Sir, if I may be so bold, I think I would make a rare assistant to the Dispenser, me being so handy with bottles in the Bar, and celebrated for my trick of pulling two corks out at once, and a third with my teeth from a bottle held between my knees.

Well, Sir, it is great to think we won't be all separated in this here war against old Nasty, even though we is to be fighting on the Home Front and not, as in the last war, in the Front Line.

Your obedient Servant, Sir,
E. WOBBLEGOOSE.
G. C. N.

Secret Weapon

"He declared, 'our armies are daily demonstrating their mastery. Our air forces are victoriously opposing the enemy while at sea, our fleets have paralysed the submarine menace.'"—*Indian Paper*.

"General, disengaged. Superior country girl, well trained, likes children clean."

Advt. in *Daily Paper*.

Don't we all?



their feet again before returning to their units.

How you go about starting a place like that *now* I don't know, but in the last war I think it began by someone getting in public subscriptions, and once it was a going concern the War Office took it over, or paid a capitation grant for each patient, or something like that.

The idea, I think you will agree, demands investigation.

Yours faithfully,
EZEKIEL HIGGS.

From General Sir Armstrong Forcursue, K.B.E., C.S.I., Captain Roughover Golf Club.

Monday, 16th October.

DEAR WHELK,—All right, any port in a storm; and seeing the Club could easily be converted and part of the present house-staff absorbed as cooks, orderlies, etc., it would at least keep these people from going on the dole, if it did nothing else.

As to the Links, we might in the same way retain the ground staff by complying with the Government's Emergency Tillage Order, the Hospital eventually taking over the produce. About this latter point, and speaking perfectly candidly, I may say that it will give me the greatest pleasure watching those ghastly greens being ploughed up. I always rated them the worst in the country, especially the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 17th and 18th.

As to yourself, I am reluctantly compelled to agree that there seems no alternative but that you should become Secretary or Registrar or whatever it is, of the new concern; although it seems a great pity you couldn't have been forced to join up again, as an intensive

spell of discipline would have done you all the good in the world. Why the Board which examined you last August classified you as physically unfit beats me. If they had said you were mentally unfit I could have understood.

Yours truly,
ARMSTRONG FORCURSUE.

From Admiral Charles Sneyring-Stymie, C.B., "The Bents," Roughover.

17th October, 1939.

DEAR SIR,—This is appalling news about your being Registrar of the new Military Convalescent Hospital. General Forcursue tells me there is no alternative, but suggested that he and I and Lionel Nutmeg and Harrington Nettle should serve on the Hospital's Board of Management and so keep you from bungling everything upside-down.



Children's Books

CHILDREN'S books are unhappily fewer this Christmas and very few of them indeed seem to be of a size to fit the average stocking; on the other hand the large picture-book which modern colour-printing has made so admirable is well represented, and this after all is the best kind to read lying flat on one's stomach after the Christmas lunch.

ANIMALS

To begin with the agreeable subject of animals: the most agreeable of all, the Panda, is the hero of *In His Little Black Waistcoat*, by JOAN KIDDELL-MONROE (LONGMAN'S, 6/-), large and beautifully illustrated for the youngest reader, *Wanda the Panda*, by ISOBEL ST. VINCENT (WARD LOCK, 3/6), and *Chin-Pao and the Giant Pandas*, by CHIANG YEE (COUNTRY LIFE, 7/6)—this is more advanced and the Panda quotes largely from CONFUCIUS, but it is an exquisite book with quietly coloured pictures. As for horses, *Sheltie the Shetland Pony*, by ALAN W. SEABY, and *Khyberie in Burma*, by Major C. M. ENRIQUEZ (A. & C. BLACK, 5/-), and *The Chestnut Pony*, by PAMELA PHILLIPS (COUNTRY LIFE, 5/-), are just right for Pony Club members; *The Picture Book of Horses* (WARD LOCK, 1/-) and *Blaze and the Gypsies*, by C. W. ANDERSON (COUNTRY LIFE, 3/6), are for beginners at reading and riding; *Adolphus*, by LOIS CASTELLAIN (HEINEMANN, 2/6), introduces "a cart-horse of endearing idiocy." KATHLEEN HALE's magnificent *Orlando*, the Marmalade cat, is even better in his *Trip Abroad* (COUNTRY LIFE, 6/-) than on his camping holiday; this is a picture-book of the first water. T. S. ELIOT's *Rum Tum Tugger*, *Macavity*, *Skimbleshanks* and so forth appear in *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (FABER AND FABER, 3/6), in verse of intoxicating rhythm which should all be read aloud. *The Puppy Called Spinach*, by MARGARET BAKER (BLACKWELL, 3/6), *Bill*, by PAULINE MORLAND (SIMPSON MARSHALL, 5/-), and *Susan and Smudge*, by LEWIS DUTTON (FREDERICK WARNE, 3/6), are all pleasant dog stories with pleasant pictures. The following are illustrated books for four-to-seven-year-olds: *The Travels of Maurice* (a globe-trotting rabbit), by ALICE COATS (FABER AND FABER, 6/-); *Dennis the Donkey* by WILLIAM MCGREAL (FREDERICK WARNE, 3/6); *Mumfie's Uncle Samuel*, by KATHARINE TOZER (MURRAY, 5/-), for those who like elephants, and *Mr. Tittlewit's Holiday*, by M. F. KNIGHT (PITMAN, 5/-), for those who prefer mice; *The Big Goose and the Little White Duck*, by MEINDERT DE JONG (HEINEMANN, 5/-) in the fairy-tale tradition; *The Adventures of Thomas Trout*, by ROY BEDDINGTON (METHUEN, 5/-); *Tales of the Four Pigs and Brock the Badger*, by ALISON UTTLEY (FABER AND FABER, 5/-); *William and His Kitten*, by MARJORIE FLACK (JOHN LANE, 3/6); *Derek the Dragon*, by NANCY CATFORD (MULLER, 2/-), and *Noah's Animals*, by W. BRIGGS (PITMAN, 2/6), both good books to put in a stocking. *The Youngest Camel*, by KAY BOYLE (FABER AND FABER, 3/6), is beautifully written and a worthy successor to the *Just-So Stories*. *The Adventures of Puffin*, by URSULA MORAY-WILLIAMS and *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, by R. and F. ATWATER (both HARRAP, 5/-), are for somewhat older readers. *The Long Grass Whispers*, by GERALDINE ELLIOT (ROUTLEDGE, 7/6), is a collection of African animal tales with outstandingly good illustrations. *More Adventures With the Zoo Man*, by DAVID SETH-SMITH (PITMAN, 3/6), is full of excellent stories and photographs.

ADVENTURE STORIES

WARNE have added to their Treasure Series at 3/6 *The Golden Galleon*, by EILEEN HEMING, *The Forgotten Term*, by

HYLTON CLEAVER, *Air Below Zero*, by BRACEBRIDGE HEMING (for prospective airmen) and *The Two B's and Becky*, by HEATHER WHITE (a girl's school story). They also publish, at 6/- each, *Quid's Quest*, by GURNEY SLADE, and *Drums Across the Water*, by HUGH CHESTERMAN. The following are good stories about ordinary children who meet with extraordinary adventures: *Esmeralda Ahoy!* by E. FAIRHOLME and P. POWELL (HEINEMANN, 5/-) (yachting and an I.R.A. plot), *The Ozus in Summer*, by K. HULL and P. WHITLOCK (CAPE, 7/6) (a riding holiday in Persia), *Super Fun*, by "Five Boys" (JOHN LANE, 7/6), *The Northways Quest*, by J. WESTERMAN (WARD LOCK, 3/6) (hidden treasure), *Holiday Luck*, by LORNA LEWIS (HEINEMANN, 6/-) (caravanning), *John and Mary's Secret Society*, by GRACE JAMES (MULLER, 3/-), and *Toby Twinkle*, by D. A. LOVELL (CAPE, 5/-). Smugglers and pirates, the traditional Christmas villains, appear in *Smuggler's Gap*, by M. E. ATKINSON (JOHN LANE, 7/6), *The Adventures of Michael and the Pirates*, by T. TIERNAN (CAPE, 2/6), and *Captain Slaughterboard Drops Anchor*, by M. PEAKE (COUNTRY LIFE, 5/-)—but the illustrations to this, though brilliant, are quite unsuitable for sensitive children. *The Keepers of Elephant Valley*, by R. CAMPBELL (HEINEMANN, 6/-), *Silver Chief to the Rescue*, by J. O'BRIEN (METHUEN, 5/-), and *Desert Peacemaker*, by D. DUFF (BURNS OATES, 3/6) are all good stories for boys—what used to be called "rattling yarns." *Big Business Billy*, by JANUSZ KORCZAK (MINERVA, 6/-) is an exceptional story of an American boy who organises his class-mates on modern business lines. In a class by themselves are HECTOR MALOT's *Nobody's Boy* and *Nobody's Girl* (RICH AND COWAN, 6/- each); *Nobody's Boy* is a translation of *Sans Famille*, which received the Academie Award; *Nobody's Girl* is the sequel, and they are about the lives of young children in the slums and streets and travelling circuses of France.

FAIRY STORIES

Among these, J. W. DUNNE's *An Experiment With St. George* (FABER AND FABER, 6/-) takes pride of place. It is certainly as successful as his experiment with time, and has a delightful heroine in *Cleodolinda*, a witch called *Howling Harriet*, silver javelins and a dress of dove's feathers. *A Treasure Box of Stories* (HARRAP, 7/6) contains forty stories for ten-year-olds, *Bee-Wing and Other Stories*, by MADGE POLKINGHORNE (BURNS OATES, 2/6), is for younger readers, and so are *The Woozle of Where?* by C. B. POULTNEY (METHUEN, 5/-), *The Adventures of Fudge the Elf*, by KEN REID (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 2/6), and *The Frog, the Penny and The Big Black Tree*, by W. MCGREAL (WARNE, 3/6). More exotic and beautifully illustrated are *The Bird Talisman*, by H. A. WEDGWOOD (FABER AND FABER, 6/-), a delicate story of swans and hermits, and *Chinese Fairy Tales*, by CHIEN GOCHUEN (COUNTRY LIFE, 7/6), which include a fox, a goblin, and a man who lived in a tea-pot. HODDER AND STOUGHTON have produced the perfect Christmas present, a new edition of BARRIE's *Peter Pan* (25/-); the colour and line illustrations by EDMUND BLAMPFIED are delightful, though they don't disturb our allegiance to the old ones by ARTHUR RACKHAM. *The Immortal Babes*, by LAURA ORVIETO (DAKERS, 7/6), and *Long, Long Ago*, by BLANCHE WINDER (WARD LOCK, 3/6), are two collections of stories retold from the classical myths.

CHILDREN FROM OTHER LANDS

Saranga the Pygmy, by ATTILIO GATTI (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 8/6), is excellent, full of the accurate details



"Yes, Gretchen, that is fairly hate-recording—though I fear it wouldn't have passed with the Kaiser."

children love and the best book of its kind since *Kak, the Copper Eskimo*. *The French Twins*, by LUCY PERKINS (CAPE, 3/6), a story of a girl and boy living at Rheims during the last war, is charmingly written but rather unfortunately topical. *Chinese Children At Play*, by YUI SHUFANG (METHUEN, 3/6), is for quite young children and is one of the best presents they could get.

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

FABER AND FABER have published three attractive biographies of musicians at 6/- each: *Sebastian Bach*, *Mozart the Wonder Boy* and *Joseph Haydn*, all by OPAL WHEELER and SYBIL DEUCHER. The stories are simply told and the historical pill is nicely gilded. *Robin Hood to the Rescue*, by AGNES BLUNDELL, and *Drums of the Sea* (about Captain COOK) come from BURNS OATES at 3/6. *Deeds that Held the Empire*, by Major E. W. SHEPPARD (MURRAY, 7/6), which ranges from HASTINGS and the Pindari to LAWRENCE and the Arabs, is not written specially for children, but would be an excellent present for a schoolboy who likes to get his teeth well into the heroic past.

GAMES AND PUZZLES

The First War-Time Christmas Book (LONDON UNIVERSITY PRESS, 3/6) is full of pictures, puzzles and stories, and the things to make are all constructed from cardboard, which will be a relief to parents. *The Wonder Book of Things to Do* (WARD LOCK, 5/-) is more elaborate; it is excellent, but take warning—it will lead the children to demand thick

distemper, powdered plaster, glue, cement, and a number of articles "which can be purchased for a few shillings." *The Puzzle Book*, by MORLEY ADAMS (FABER AND FABER, 6/-), has more than five hundred problems of varying difficulty, and should silence schoolboys of the mathematical and inquisitive age.

VERSE AND PICTURES

Merry Meet, by MARY KELLY WALKER (HEINEMANN, 4/6), is a charming book of verse, charmingly illustrated, about the inhabitants of a village, *Policeman Bill*, *Colonel Pratt*, *Mr. Croker* and so forth; *Araminta Popkins' Prue*, by V. L. BAILLIEU (HEATH CRANTON, 5/-), is for very young children; *Imagination* (LUTTERWORTH, 3/6) is a collection of rhymes by HARRY HEMSLEY "about trains and parrots and oranges, and imaginings more real than everyday life"; *And to Think That I Saw it on Mulberry Street* (COUNTRY LIFE, 3/6), by Dr. SEUSS, is a very unusual adventure and worth buying if only for the picture of a blue elephant in full career.

MISCELLANEOUS

Here are two books of sound advice: *Letters to Young Shooters*, by "UNCLE RALPH" (RICH AND COWAN, 10/6), which will enable the reader "to listen with interest at any shooting party luncheon," and should become a classic; and Sir R. BADEN-POWELL's *Paddle Your Own Canoe*, twenty-three tales of men and animals with moral applications. Finally there is the gentle and delightful *Four to Fourteen*, by "A Victorian Child" (ROBERT HALE), which must be called a good present for a good girl.



"You can't go in there to-day. It's too deep."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

A Georgian Love Story

IN the chronicles of high society, HENRIETTA (*née* SPENCER), Viscountess DUNCANNON and Countess of BESSBOROUGH, has been somewhat overshadowed by her sister GEORGINA, the beautiful Duchess of DEVONSHIRE, and her daughter CAROLINE, the most memorable of BYRON's mistresses. But the publication, nearly twenty-five years ago, of *The Private Correspondence of Lord Granville Leveson-Gower* revealed her at once as one of the best letter-writers of her sex and as the heroine of a remarkable love story. That story, from those letters and other relevant material, Miss ETHEL COLBURN MAYNE has reconstructed in *A Regency Chapter* (MACMILLAN, 16/-), bringing to what in a double sense has been a labour of love the intimacy with a brilliant and fascinating period of social history, the human wisdom, the wit and the lightness of touch which characterised her Lives of BYRON and his wife—both of them figures, as are SHERIDAN, CANNING, Prince FLORIZEL of Wales and a host of other celebrities, in the present comedy. Miss MAYNE, however, has not elaborated her distinguished cast or her background of great houses. Assuming that we know almost as much about them as she does, she concentrates on the central pair and the enigma of their relationship; for the countess, as intelligent as she was charming and surrounded by adorers till she was nearly sixty, gave all her worship to a man twelve years her junior, who was little more than a handsome fop, who was perpetually unfaithful and perpetually disappointing, and ended by marrying her niece.

H. I.

We Saw Him Act (HURST and BLACKETT, 21/-) is a compilation of some fifty articles by those who watched "him"—who could it be but the great IRVING?—from the front of the house or experienced him on the stage. The result is a most interesting book on an extraordinarily interesting

figure. Given a thin voice and a lean physique, he acted with his brain and his imagination. He was at his best in pretty well any part from *Alfred Jingle* to *Hamlet*, except those which, to quote one writer, demand, like *Othello*, an inspired ox. He must have been the only *Hamlet*; ELLEN TERRY wrote that it was his best part because it was the only one big enough for him. Even when not well suited—Sir SQUIRE BANCROFT was asked "What about Romeo?" "True," he replied with solemnity, "Irving was physically ill-fitted to Romeo; but"—a pause—"the apothecary scene, my dear Sir, the apothecary scene." So in *Lear* by brute force the part beat him till the tent scene came, a piece of most beautiful acting. To give an idea of the magnetism of the man: one writer saw him in nearly all his parts, many of them twenty times or more and none on less than five or six occasions; another saw him a hundred and eighty times; but the best article in the book is an appreciation of IRVING'S *Iago*, by the late GEORGE SAINTSBURY, who had a distaste for the theatre and knew Shakespeare as well as he did the multiplication table. Probably BARRIE summed him up best when he said: "When Irving is on the stage you don't see anybody else." The effect he had on his fellow actors must be left for readers to find for themselves. But there is one shortcoming in the book that demands the bitterest censure. A writer—be his name withheld—refers to St. Austell as a remote village. Confound the fellow.

Brittisch Lebensraum

It is beginning to dawn on us that if we want to save the countryside we shall have to salvage the towns. Both should be taught to know their places and keep them. Streets should be streets and lanes lanes—both the best and most characteristic of their kind, and the people in them should be towns-folk and country-folk respectively. Only in this way can the suburban challenge to both be defeated. This argument, vigorously, reasonably and vivaciously sustained by Mr. STEPHEN BONE, renders his *Albion, An Artist's Britain* (BLACK, 15/-), as memorable a piece of pleading as this island's truest lovers could wish. His canvases—actually, you take it, panels—do not portray beauty-spots but representative Scots and English scenery as far asunder as Glen Dochart and Leeds. His text is a history of the land and what has been, is, and might be, on it: from the padding of neolithic bears to the prowling of speculative builders—this last outpaced in spirit, if not circumvented in fact, by national pride and good sense.



"Is that FPAOQ? DZTCS calling: an urgent message from ML25D to ACPN2—Please instruct BIO inform HQMFA forthwith if OCBTC can play golf this afternoon with DADWRS."



"HAVE YOU BROUGHT ME ANY SOUVENIRS?"

"ONLY THIS BULLET THAT THE DOCTOR TOOK OUT OF MY SIDE."

"I WISH IT HAD BEEN A GERMAN HELMET."

H. M. Brock, December 20th, 1916

It is to be hoped that a cheaper reprint will bring this exhilarating book nearer to the common purse and the common conscience.

An Anglogologist—or English-Fancier

M. JACQUES-EMILE BLANCHE, celebrated French painter, is one of the pleasantest of Anglogologists. By which it is not meant that he is blindly anglophile. Far from it. Like M. ANDRÉ MAUROIS he has many friends in England, and finds in the island species a rich field for the exercise of his wit. In his new book, *More Portraits of a Lifetime* (DENT, 18/-), over three hundred personalities are met or anecdoted, a large proportion of them being islanders, including RAMSAY MACDONALD, JAMES JOYCE, GEORGE MOORE and GEORGE V. Not that M. BLANCHE can be accused of celebrity-hunting; he is far from being dazzled by fame. "Roger Fry . . . without confessing it . . . was, like his

Gordon Square friends, dominated by the fear of appearing conventional, and of not being first at the winning-post."

"Was Sir Thomas Beecham out, like Whistler, to astonish?" ponders M. BLANCHE. And MATISSE and PICASSO? —Two big gold-mines being exploited by the dealer who first prospected them, someone who now sees to it that their production remains stable? This Frenchman, however, is kinder to the ladies—notably our English literary ones. His fine sensibility is ravished by the subtleties of writing and thought and feeling in the works of Mrs. WOOLF. He has much to say of the weird "École de Bonheur" at Fontainebleau where KATHERINE MANSFIELD ended her days, eating the fruits of the earth and sleeping over the cow-shed to get a little warmth for her poor bewildered body. In ROSAMOND LEHMANN he discovers the spiritual aristocrat, disconcertingly disguised, and tells this pleasant story: One evening at the Princesse EDMOND DE POLIGNAC's someone asked ROSAMOND LEHMANN where her

husband was. "He's fighting in Spain," she explained. "I do hope Franco will soon win," said an aristocratic old lady, full of sympathy, "and that you'll get him back." "Oh, he's fighting for the Government," ROSAMOND LEHMANN timidly replied. The temperature around her fell considerably, concludes M. BLANCHE drily.

Kind Hearts with Coronets

Mrs. THIRKELL's country estates lie at an equal distance from those of JANE AUSTEN and Mr. WODEHOUSE. They have an amiable park-like quality, without dust or heat. The residents are pleasant rather than farcical and their emotions more satisfactory than subtle. She is true to the old-fashioned, or rather traditional, form of comic plot, freely scattering her misunderstandings and neatly pairing off her couples. She has a right to exaggerate discreetly on the subject of agricultural shows and dinner-parties, committees and walks with the dog, patronage and pig-breeding, because her knowledge of country matters is impeccable. How much is summed up in the words "Lady Bond kept a felt hat and some gloves in the hall against sudden incursions into the garden," or "Mr. Middleton had made up his mind that Denis would arrive fainting, in a shabby velvet coat, for such was his rapidly conceived idea of an invalid who was a musician"! Her new novel, *Before Lunch* (HAMISH HAMILTON, 7/6), is not the best she has written. The character-drawing is still expert, and the terribly well-informed and endlessly talkative Mr. Middleton is perhaps as good as anything yet, but some of the relish seems to have gone out of the situations. There is nothing so masterly as the ball in *Wild Strawberries*, or the first evening at Pomfret Towers—and no new character, by the way, quite as engaging as Lord Pomfret, who makes a short and welcome reappearance. But like all its predecessors this book is perfect reading, agreeable, effortless and charming.

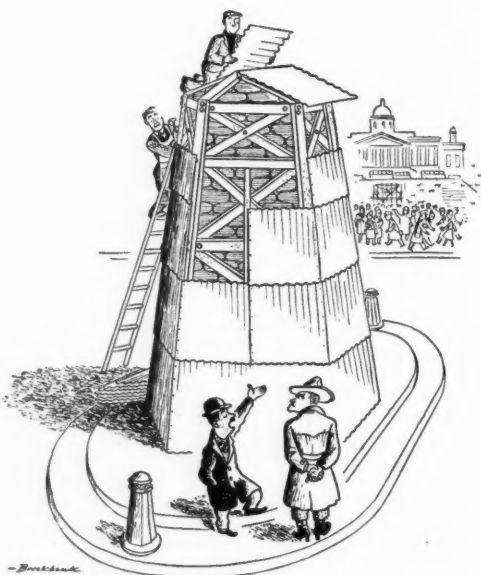
An Interrupted Cruise

The COLES, G. D. H. and M., have so often and so lavishly entertained readers of detective fiction that it may seem ungrateful to express dissatisfaction with *Greek Tragedy* (COLLINS, 7/6). Their tale, it is true, starts promisingly enough with an amusing collection of people "enjoying an educational holiday cruise" around the Isles of Greece. But nothing of especial interest happens to any of them

until half of the story is told, and then the cruise-leader is murdered and some other members of the party are drastically, but not fatally, poisoned and purged. Luckily for the bewildered tourists, *Superintendent Wilson* makes a sudden, not to say a startling, appearance on the scene, and he adds to the marks of merit which the COLES had previously awarded him. The problems, however, that need solving on this occasion are not really worthy of this excellent investigator's consideration.

Sound Deduction

The chief difficulty with which Mr. R. A. J. WALLING'S *Mr. Tolefree* had to cope in *They Liked Entwistle* (HODDER AND STOUTON, 7/6) was that several people were suspected of having committed a clever but cool-blooded murder. Never in a story of this kind can there have been a greater scarcity of alibis. But when *Tolefree*, on his return from carrying out some work for *Entwistle* in France, found that his employer had been killed, he set to work with his usual thoroughness to track down the murderer. Possibly readers of detective fiction who are satisfied with nothing less than a continual succession of excursions and alarms may find the pace of this tale a little pedestrian, but if *Tolefree's* methods are leisurely they also have the merit of being intelligible to those of us who cannot hope to take even a pass degree in the school of deduction. In short, this is a most readable WALLING.



"And here we have the famous equestrian statue of Charles the First."

Mr. Punch greatly regrets that in a recent notice of *The Sweet of the Year* his

reviewer suggested—following the author, Mr. H. J. MASSINGHAM—that Guiting Great Wood had been felled by Corpus Christi College, Oxford. The facts are that twenty-two acres out of 380 in Guiting Great Wood have been cut down for replanting.

If there is any holly in Guiting Great Wood Mr. Punch hopes that a bunch may be sent to Mr. MASSINGHAM as a Yuletide offering.

All Friends Together

"It is estimated that over 10,000 members of the city's civil defence organisation, working in an area with over 300,000 inhabitants, took part in yesterday's demonstration, and embraced not only members of the A.R.P., but auxiliary fire services, first-aid and ambulance corps, demolition and rescue squads, special constabulary, and decontamination squads."—*Glasgow Paper*.

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